

COMBAT RESCUE OFFICER ASSESSMENT PROGRAM



POINT OF CONTACT: CRO ASSESSMENT PROGRAM MANAGER
HQ ACC/A3J
205 DODD BLVD, STE 101
JOINT BASE LANGLEY-EUSTIS, VA 23665

DSN: 575-9250
COM: (757) 225-9250
CRO.SELECTION@US.AF.MIL

Current as of: 1 August 2014

“That Others May Live To Return With Honor”

Table of Contents

1. [OVERVIEW](#)
2. [CAREER FIELD ELIGIBILITY](#)
3. [ASSESSMENT PROCESS](#)
4. [APPLICATION INSTRUCTIONS](#)
5. [PHYSICAL FITNESS TEST \(PFT\)](#)
 - [Instructional Video](#) (for reference use only)

1. OVERVIEW:

- 1.1. Thank you for your interest in the Combat Rescue Officer (CRO) career field. This document outlines the application and assessment process for becoming a CRO. For more information, please email CRO.Selection@us.af.mil.
- 1.2. Background: The United States places a lot of faith in ensuring its protectors are prepared to bring home its citizens and expects the highest caliber of leaders to be out in front. Preserving the lives and well-being of U.S. personnel is one of the highest priorities of the nation and Department of Defense (DoDD 3002.01). In support of this priority, the USAF holds Personnel Recovery (PR) as one of its service core functions, the fundamental tasks the service performs for the Nations and its citizens. USAF Combat Rescue Officers fulfill this function by leading and advising operations across the full spectrum of military operations and during all phases of joint, coalition, and combined operations. Combat Rescue Officers work side-by-side with USAF and joint forces, as well as interagency partners to carry out one of the most challenging tasks—*saving lives and safeguarding the honor of our nation and its citizens*.
- 1.3. Duties: Combat Rescue Officers (CROs) are Battlefield Airmen charged with rescuing personnel, recovery national assets, and managing PR activities. The CRO Air Force Specialty Code (13D) is a non-rated aircrew officer that leads and commands PR as a direct combatant. Combat Rescue Officers are the focal point during the four PR functions (Prepare, Plan, Execute, Adapt) and provide expertise to command and battle staffs on recovery operations, to include survival, evasion, resistance, and escape (SERE) programs.

2. CAREER FIELD ELIGIBILITY:

The demands of a CRO are high and outstanding leadership qualities required. Exceptional personal responsibility and maturity, strong analytical decision making and logical reasoning, and excellent physical fitness and mental fortitude are essential characteristics of a CRO. Current officers up to O-3 (maximum two years' time-in-grade), cadets, and enlisted OTS candidates may apply. Additional eligibility criteria are listed below.

- Be male (per DoD Policy)
- Security clearance: Applicant must be eligible to obtain a top secret clearance.
- Retention: 6-years active duty service commitment upon completion of training pipeline
- Volunteer for Hazardous Duty: Parachuting (Static-line & freefall), Combat Diver (SCUBA), and mission aircrew.
- Medical: USAF Class III Flight Physical, according to AFI 48-123 (see application)
- Background: Outstanding resume with no negative personal history
- Physical Fitness: Satisfactorily complete the minimum scores on the Fitness Test.
- Each candidate must complete and maintain the requirements for CRO duty as detailed in AFI 36-2105, to include completion of the CRO indoctrination course. Failure to complete all training requirements will result in the candidate being reclassified or removed from service according to the requirements of the United States Air Force.

“That Others May Live To Return With Honor”

3. ASSESSMENT PROCESS

3.1. The assessment process is designed to select the right officer, while minimizing time, effort, and resources. Candidates selected from Phase II have achieved a 95% overall success rate in becoming a CRO. Control and release of information pertinent to the CRO Assessment Program is approved by lead command, ACC/A3. Candidates are informed of their evaluation results, significant findings and selection status at the completion of the phase II assessment week. ANG/AFRC Phase I assessment is a separate process, but all CRO candidates will be assessed by the lead-command Phase II consolidated board and selected by the designated board president (O-5/O-6).

3.1.1. There are two CRO assessment cycles conducted each year. Each cycle includes a package review (Phase I) and a one-week field evaluation (Phase II) @ Fairchild AFB, WA. Assessment Cycle is as follows:

- mid-January (NLT 15th)—Phase I applications due to CRO Assessment Program Manager (Phase II likely in late March or early April)
- mid-August (NLT 15th)—Phase I applications due to CRO Assessment Program Manager (Phase II likely in Oct)

3.1.2. **Cadet Applicants** (AFROTC or Service Academy). Cadets should submit a Phase I package before they are classified into AFSC—at least 12-18 months before their projected date of commission (DOC). If a cadet is classified into an AFSC, applications will be handled on a case-by-case basis with Line Officer Accessions at AFPC to determine eligibility. ROTC cadets must have completed Field Training before applying. HQ AFROTC will determine ROTC cadet availability, issue orders and coordinate funding. Service Academy cadets should apply in their Second Class year. Each Service Academy will determine cadet availability, issues orders and coordinate funding. If a cadet is selected from Phase II, the lead command (ACC) CRO Functional Manager will coordinate with AFPC to classify each cadet into AFSC 13DX during their senior year.

3.1.3. **Active Duty USAF Officer:** As an Air Force officer, the applicant must obtain a written memo from the appropriate career field/functional manager agreeing to release the applicant from the current career field and/or service duty, if the applicant is selected after Phase II to become a CRO. The candidate must also receive an endorsement letter from their commander. The CRO Assessment Program Manager has no authority to interfere with another career field's manning requirements. If the applicant is invited to Phase II, but was not selected, the applicant will return to their previous assignment and career field.

3.1.4. **Inter-service Transfer:** Officers in other Services seeking to apply for CRO should reference *AFI 36-2004 Inter-service Transfer of Officers* and appropriate service specific instructions. Applicants should submit an application to the CRO Phase I Assessment Board before a service transfer is approved, and may be invited to attend Phase II before transferring to the Air Force. However, candidates must include a commander endorsement letter supporting this transfer, in lieu of career field releasability by an AFPC functional manger. Selection at

Phase II does not guarantee an approved inter-service transfer; the processes are independent of each other. Other service officers must secure an inter-service transfer if selected from phase II. Air Force representatives cannot assist in this process until the losing service completes required release documentation. Request. Enlisted members in another service would follow the same step listed above, but would also have to secure a USAF OTS course slot (see USAF enlisted) prior to selection as a CRO candidate from Phase II.

3.1.5. **Officer Training School:** Enlisted members who desire to become a CRO should apply to OTS and Phase I—these processes are independent of each other. Selection into OTS prior to competing for CRO assessment is not required, but may factor into a Phase II invitation and officer assignment actions. Selection at Phase II doesn't guarantee acceptance into OTS—you must still meet the requirements outlined by AF Recruiting Service (AFRS) to enter OTS and earn a commission (see AFI 36-2013). Upon graduation from OTS, AFPC will classify member for training as a CRO Trainee.

3.1.6. **Civilians:** Legal guidance precludes the Department of the Air Force from evaluating civilian personnel due to liability issues. Civilians are encouraged to enlist in any of the Battlefield Airmen AFSCs [e.g. Pararescue (PJ) & Combat Control (CCT)], and apply to Phase I and Officer Training School (OTS) at the appropriate time in their career. Civilians may also apply to OTS to become a commissioned officer and submit a package at a later date.

3.2. **Phase I:** Application packages will be reviewed and stratified according to eligibility.

3.2.1. Stratification includes four major categories:

- Category 1. Rescue Operator Physical Fitness Test Scores.
- Category 2. Application review for attention to detail. Explanation of missing or late material must be explained in a memo for record. Exceptions to requirements will be considered on a case by case basis.
- Category 3. Leadership documented in OPR, EPR, cadet field reports, resume, letter of recommendation.
- Category 4. Academics. Professional military education should be rank equivalent. College grade point averages and AFOQT must meet requirements for USAF commissioning.

3.2.2. All candidates will receive an electronic mail notification no later than two weeks after the submission deadline to inform them of their selection or non-selection status—if an applicant does not hear from the Assessment Program Manager, then the applicant should immediately request a status update. The selected applicants' chain of command will be officially notified by a correspondence from ACC/A3J. Alternates and non-selects will be notified separately to maintain privacy of the applicant. All non-invited applicants may request feedback on their applications from the Assessment Program Manager.

3.2.3. Selected applicants (candidates) will receive further guidance and information. The Assessment Program Manager will designate a primary and alternate team commander. The designated team commander(s) will be the primary focal point for all administrative actions before and during Phase II. The team is encouraged to communicate and prepare—a cohesive team performs better during critical assessment events.

3.3. **Phase II:** Phase II is a one-week field assessment conducted @ Fairchild AFB, WA. The purpose is to assess each candidate's raw potential and ability to command specialized forces for physically and mentally demanding operations. Each candidate will be assessed against the attributes commonly associated with a Rescue Operator, while stressing them with demanding routines typical of Battlefield Airmen operations:

- Physical Strength and Endurance
- Critical Thinking and Problem Solving
- Communications and Task Management
- Stress Tolerance
- Task Performance.

3.3.1. Candidates must be prepared for a physically and mentally demanding week—and have the fortitude to push through. The cadre will observe and document everything and compile this data for selection purposes and long term analysis. This data will also be used to provide feedback to enhance personal and professional growth. Candidates should be prepared for the following:

- Evaluation: CRO Assessment Physical Fitness Test
- Evaluation: Endurance Run up to 8 miles with a set minimum pace
- Evaluation: Ruck-march movement with a set minimum pace
- Assessment: Psychological testing, interviews, and peer assessments
- Assessment: Communication skills (e.g. briefing & writing skills)
- Assessment: Day and night problem solving/critical thinking events
- Assessment: Leadership ability
- Assessment: Calisthenics
- Assessment: Water Confidence (see note)
 - Underwater drills w/ mask and snorkel recovery
 - Buddy breathing—capable of breathing from snorkel, face in water, for up to 5-minutes, with no face mask.
 - Treading water—capable of treading water with hands and ears out of water for 5-minutes.

Note: water confidence is a high risk activity and requires a swim buddy and/or oversight (e.g. lifeguard) during training. Training without a swim buddy or oversight is not condoned by the Air Force.

3.3.2. Phase II candidates **must be on government funded travel orders—funding is provided.** Billeting will be coordinated for all candidates and transportation will be available. Candidates are encouraged to bring MRE's, or other sources of expedient caloric intake, for use during extended training periods.

- 3.3.3. The class team commander is responsible for providing the Assessment Program Manager with candidate travel and contact information no later than one week prior to arrival—candidates will arrive no earlier than one day prior to the assessment start date. The first few candidates to arrive on station will use the base shuttle service and check-in at Survival Inn. One single candidate will then contact the Phase II Project Officer (PO)—between the hours of 1000-1100 & 1300-1600—to access vehicle keys and will be responsible for facilitating transportation for their remaining team members. The class team commander(s) will contact the PO at 1000-hours, or 1500-hours, on Saturday (one day prior to start date) for initial instructions and be responsible for the issued vehicles during Phase II.
- 3.3.4. During the assessment, candidates will be continuously observed and individual performance will be documented. If candidate stops training or disengages from the task at hand, the CRO monitoring the training event will issue a warning referred to as a “QBA” or “quit by action.” Candidates will be removed from assessment at the discretion of the program manager if a total of three QBA warnings are given to an individual candidate during the assessment week. Actions to return a removed candidate to his duty station will be taken as soon as possible.
- 3.3.5. At any time during assessment, a candidate may verbalize his option to self-initiate his elimination, “**SIE.**” The candidate will then be immediately removed from the assessment process. There is no option for officers or enlisted combatants to quit on the battlefield or during the execution of a recovery mission. A decision to quit in the field cost lives and mission success. Actions to return this candidate to his duty station will be taken as soon as possible. **Self-initiated elimination action permanently disqualifies candidates from future consideration in the CRO Assessment program.**
- 3.3.6. Candidates will be individually advised of their selection status on the last day of Phase II. If selected for entry into the CRO career field, notification will be sent to the candidate’s commander and to the AFPC resource manager for 13DX, indicating selection status. Selected candidates’ chain of command will be notified by letter correspondence from HQ ACC/A3 within 30 days of Phase II completion.
- 3.3.7. Combat Rescue Officers, to include selected candidates, are expected to maintain high levels of professionalism and performance throughout their career—selected candidates must be ready to enter training at the earliest available training date. A candidate may be revoked from training by the CRO Career Field Manager should the candidate fail to uphold these standards of excellence.
- 3.3.8. Candidates that are not selected, who have completed the entire phase II week or were medically eliminated, may re-apply.
- 3.3.9. Candidates that fail to complete phase II for safety reasons or failure to train will immediately complete documentation summarizing the condition of their removal from assessment. Copies of this documentation are provided to the candidate, while the original is maintained by the program manager. These candidates may re-apply.

- 3.3.10. Candidates may attempt CRO Assessment Phase II a maximum of two times. Further repetition of the process is considered wasteful of USAF resources and of possible mental and physical detriment to the candidate. Waiver authority is the lead command-ACC Assessment Program Manager.
- 3.3.11. Candidates that self-eliminate will not be considered eligible for subsequent application or assessment.
- 3.3.12. Candidates selected at Phase II are expected to maintain high levels of professionalism and performance while they await training, are conducting training, and after they graduate the pipeline. A candidate may be revoked from training by the CRO CFM should the candidate fail to uphold these standards of excellence.

--A final note about CRO commitment and service--

The assessment and training process is difficult. Once an officer qualifies, the position of leadership, sustainment training and deployments are demanding. There are significant personal dangers involved with the operational mission and, very often, extended periods of duty away from home. The decision to enter the CRO career field should not be made alone, regardless of an applicant's conviction and personal commitment. The family should be considered. Wives and children often experience anxieties, fears, loneliness and pressures associated with the service member's profession. Those who do adjust find an exciting and rewarding life that they may share with fellow operators and their families.

Application Instructions

Electronic Submission (Primary): Applications should be scanned and sent electronically to cro.selection@us.af.mil. Adjust resolution of the scan so that the application can be submitted as a single file that is legible but less than 5MB in total. If a package is submitted electronically, there is no need to mail a hard-copy. Retain the hard-copy for personal records.

Mailing (Alternate): Active duty applicants can mail the cover page and tabs in a plain manila envelope to the following address. Applications should not be spiral bound, in three ring binders or document protectors. It is recommended that applicants submitting a hard copy follow up with an e-mail confirmation to cro.selection@us.af.mil.

**HQ ACC/A3JS
C/O CRO Assessment Program Manager
205 Dodd Blvd, Suite 101
Langley AFB, VA 23665-2789**

The application will include the following in this order:

1. Cover page: Typed using times new roman font size 10, and black color. Signature must be hand signed.
2. Personal Narrative: One page in length (see example for format specifics)
Note: Candidates who previously attended Phase II for either the CRO (13D) or Special Tactics Officer (STO 13C) assessment programs, but were not selected, must provide a statement on their identified problem areas and what has been done to improve their readiness. If invited to return for a second Phase II, and cadre note improvement in the desired areas, candidates will be considered equally with the current assessment applicants.
3. One page résumé, emphasizing leadership experience and decision making challenges.
Note: USAF Military Members must also include their SURF:
4. Commander endorsement letter, no more than one page in length. The letter must convey their knowledge of the expectations required to become a Combat Rescue Officer. It must also include comments on how you would be an attribute to Battlefield Airmen.
5. Copies of the three most recent performance reports, cadet evaluations, etc. If your service time is less than three reports, include what you have.
6. A signed statement documenting sister service or AFPC-approved career field release. If you are not releasable from your present career field.
7. A signed statement or document indicating the date of your most recent physical examination, the medical facility and the flight surgeon's (physician) name and contact information. In the case that you are not able to attain an USAF class III flight physical, this statement/document should include any known medical issues that would preclude the approval of a USAF class III flight physical or would require a waiver. The ACC Surgeon General Office will review your records electronically, if possible.

Note: An approved USAF Flying Class III physical, with applicable sister service medical approvals, is required prior to attending CRO initial training— You may attend Phase II with an incomplete USAF Flying Class III physical, however your selection at Phase II will be contingent upon its completion and certification. Failure to obtain a USAF Flying Class III physical will remove the candidate from consideration for CRO training, regardless of selection status. AFI 36-2105 requires a CRO to maintain continued medical clearance for flight, parachute and diving status. **Do not include any portion of your medical records or any privileged medical information in your application.**

“That Others May Live To Return With Honor”

RANK/NAME: _____
SSN: _____
WORK ADDRESS: _____
EMAIL: _____
PHONE: _____
DUTY TITLE _____
BRANCH OF SERVICE: _____
AFSC/MOS: _____

INSERT YOUR PHOTO HERE

(2 inch x 2 inch)

Passport size photo

The photo should be an official photo lab forward facing portrait. You should be in service dress uniform and the photo should extend from the bottom of your name tag/bottom of your ribbon rack to the top of your head. If an official photo lab is not available, use a digital camera and stand against a white wall with nothing in background.

COMMISSIONING SOURCE/DATE: _____

CUMULATIVE GPA _____ MAJOR: _____

COMMANDER (CC) NAME/ RANK _____

CC EMAIL / PHONE _____

CAREER FIELD MANAGER (CFM) NAME/RANK _____

CFM EMAIL / PHONE _____

RESCUE OPERATOR FITNESS TEST: TEST DATE _____ COMPOSITE SCORE

3 MILE RUN TIME: _____ MINUTES _____ SECONDS

1500 METER SWIM TIME _____ MINUTES _____ SECONDS

PULL-UPS: _____ SIT-UPS: _____ PUSH-UPS: _____

ADMINISTRATOR'S RANK/NAME _____

CONTACT (EMAIL/PHONE: _____

Candidate Acknowledgment Statement: "I, (Insert Name Here), hereby apply to become a Combat Rescue Officer and volunteer to perform hazardous duties pertinent to Battlefield Airmen operations. I acknowledge that I can be removed from further assessment for any of the following reasons: 1) quitting through words or actions, 2) becoming a medical or safety risk, 3) committing an integrity violation such as lying, cheating, or stealing, or 4) failing to meet specified fitness standards. I further acknowledge that upon graduation of training, I will incur a six-year active duty service commitment in accordance with AFI36-2107 *Active Duty Service Commitments*, Rule 25, Note 16. To the best of my knowledge, the information contained in this application is true."

CANDIDATE SIGNATURE _____ DATE: _____

"That Others May Live To Return With Honor"

MEMORANDUM FOR COMBAT RESCUE OFFICER ASSESSMENT BOARD

FROM: AFROTC/DET 825 (C/3c Jonathon B. Doe)

SUBJECT: Personal Narrative

1. This document is provided to give the selection board an overall understanding of your character and personality. It should be clear, concise, and free of extra “fluff” statements.

It should include:

1. Your personal background, such as where you grew up, significant jobs/positions held, and/or an explanation of your experiences and involvements before and during military service
2. An identification and explanation of your perceived strengths and weaknesses
3. A discussion on what attracts you to become a Combat Rescue Officer
4. Why Combat Rescue Officer is the right career for you

2. The narrative will be formatted with 1 inch margins on the left and right sides. The top margin will be between 1 inch and 1.5 inches depending on the heading you establish. The bottom will be 1 inch and will include the Guardian Angel Rescue motto: ***“That Others May Live To Return with Honor”***.

3. The heading format you see above should be followed with your own information entered in the FROM portion. The document may not exceed more than one page in length. Use Times New Roman with font size 12. Include a crest in the upper left hand corner of your header similar to an official memorandum for record. See AFH 33-337 *The Tongue and Quill* or sister service equivalent for examples of an Official Memorandum for Record.

JOHNATHON B. DOE, C/3c, AFROTC

“That Others May Live To Return With Honor”

Physical Fitness Test (PFT)

1. **General:** Rescue and Recovery operations require physical fitness and mental stamina—the environments are dynamic and require a formidable force to be ready for the unknown. The capacity for skillful and continued mental performance during sustained physical activity, and the ability to recover from exertion rapidly, is critical to successful accomplishment of physically challenging recovery missions. Each applicant must execute the PFT in accordance with the below standards and document the results of their physical fitness test on the cover page.

2. Physical Fitness Test Criteria:

- 2.1. The PFT should be administered by an individual appointed by your commander. The administrator must correct your form and not count incorrect repetitions. The test administrator will sign the cover page. Each candidate and administrator should watch the instructional video, as a guide for exercise form ONLY. The repetition and time standards referenced do not apply to officer candidates. The video is hyperlinked at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0zdKD0VMKWg&feature=plcp&context=C3f31946UDOEgsToPDskJY7F3h01Zie0ZF9II5EPI1>.
- 2.2. While minimum standards are the absolute lowest scores acceptable, physical capabilities are stressed during the rigorous training pipeline courses. It is highly recommended that applicants exceed these minimums in order to be competitive for limited positions during the assessment process.
- 2.3. Failure to meet the physical fitness standard for any event constitutes failure of the entire test—the test will be concluded immediately at this point.
- 2.4. Failure to meet minimum standards during Phase II will result in immediate disqualification from the assessment program—candidate will return to home unit.
- 2.5. The evaluation will be conducted in the following order:

Run: 3 miles, non-stop // minimum: 22 minutes

- Performed with running shoes and running shorts.
- Designed to measure aerobic endurance used during specific mission tasks.

[No more than 15-minutes rest prior to starting the calisthenics]

Pull-Ups (time limit: 1-minute) // minimum: 12

- Executed on a pull-up bar.
- The individual grasps the bar with the hands about shoulder width apart.
- This is a two-count exercise beginning from the “dead hang” position.
- Count one, pull body directly upward until the chin is over the bar, head looking forward (not up).
- Count two, lower the body until the body is again in the “dead hang” position.
- Do not swing excessively or bicycle feet as the chin is pulled over the bar.
- Designed to measure strength and endurance in the back and biceps muscles used during specific mission tasks.

“That Others May Live To Return With Honor”

2 minute rest

Sit-Ups (time limit: 2-minute) // minimum: 70
--

- Start with the back flat on the ground, knees bent at approximately a 90-degree angle, arms crossed over the chest with the hands at the shoulders, resting on the upper chest.
- Another individual may hold the feet during the exercise or secured under an anchored toe-hold bar.
- This is a two-count exercise.
- Count one; sit up until elbows contact the thigh or knee.
- Count two, return to the starting position.
- If an individual raises buttocks from ground or his hands/fingers break contact with the chest/shoulders during a repetition, the repetition is not counted.
- The only authorized rest position is in the up position.
- Designed to measure strength and endurance in abdominal and hip flexor muscle groups used during specific mission tasks. (e.g. perform swimming, lifting, and load-bearing and hand-to-hand combat tasks.)

2 minute rest

Push-Ups (time limit: 2-minutes) // minimum: 65
--

- Start from the front leaning rest position.
- The body must be maintained straight from head to heels with knees together.
- This is a two-count exercise.
- Count one, flex the elbows, lowering the body until the elbows form a 90 degree angle or less.
- Count two, raise the body until the elbows are straight and locked.
- Event is stopped when individual lifts an arm or leg or touches a knee.
- The only authorized rest position is the starting position.
- Designed to measure the strength and endurance of the chest and triceps muscles used during specific mission tasks.

[No more than 15-minutes rest prior to starting underwater swim]

25-Meter Underwater Swim (no time limit) // pass/fail event
--

- Successfully swim 25-meters underwater without surfacing
- Equipment is not utilized during this event (No goggles, face mask, fins, etc.)
- Must be totally submersed before pushing off the wall and swimming
- Surfacing prior to the 25 meter point is considered a failure for this event.
- Designed to measure aerobic endurance and water confidence in a stress free maritime environment.

[No more than 5-minutes rest prior to starting surface swim]

Surface Swim: 1500 meters, non-stop // minimum: 30 minutes

- Performed with swim trunks, face mask, or goggles, and fins using any stroke.
- **Flip-turns are not authorized.**
- Designed to measure aerobic endurance in a maritime environment and swimming ability

2.6. Grading. Times will be rounded down to the next lower point value. The composite score will be annotated on the application cover page.

CRO Assessment Physical Fitness Evaluation Criteria.							
3 MILE RUN		CALISTHENICS (minutes)				1500 METER SWIM	
TIME (min:sec)	POINTS	PULL UP (1:00)	SIT UP (2:00)	PUSH UP (2:00)	POINTS	TIME (min:sec)	POINTS
20:00	200	16	90	85	100	26:00	200
20:30	190	15	85	80	90	27:00	190
21:00	180	14	80	75	80	28:00	180
21:30	170	13	75	70	75	29:00	170
22:00	160	12	70	65	70	30:00	160
22:30	150	11	65	60	65	31:00	150
23:00	140	10	60	55	60	32:00	140
23:30	130	9	55	50	55	33:00	130
24:00	120	8	50	45	50	34:00	120

: